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TOM O'HALLERAN

1ST DISTRICT, ARIZONA

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

I am writing to share my concern with you regarding the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding formula. While well-intended, the CDBG funding formula that was utilized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act is leaving rural Arizona and much of rural America behind.

The CARES Act built on the CDBG program by providing an additional \$5 billion in much needed funding for state and local governments. However, in practice, initial funding did not reach 13 of Arizona's 15 counties. Arizona's rural counties provide much needed services to their communities and all are facing greatly reduced revenues as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, all counties are also taking on unexpected expenses related to the pandemic as they are forced to acquire personal protective equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 testing kits at great expense.

Arizona's rural counties need the CDBG funds to provide housing assistance, support homeless shelters, provide additional public services, support public infrastructure, and further support the operations of critical government programs. In future COVID-19 related legislative packages, Congress must adjust the funding formula to ensure that all counties receive direct federal assistance. The status quo is unacceptable and, as Congressional leaders, I am urging you to reform the CDBG grant program to ensure that federal dollars go to communities most in need.

Our rural and Tribal communities are struggling due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As Congress debates future COVID-19 related packages, urgent action is needed to ensure an equitable distribution of funds to rural Arizona and rural America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom O'Halleran".

Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress